

To The Public Health Committee  
Senator Terry Gerrantana, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan Johnson, Co-Chair

**I am writing in support of Raised Bill No 416.**

**It is my strong belief that the Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) level care needs to be eliminated from the CT General Statutes.**

My name is Fred Potter. I've been involved in CT's emergency medical services for 36 years –the past 30 as a paramedic and also as an EMS Instructor for the past 27 years. I've been the Emergency Medical Services Coordinator at Backus Hospital for the past 7 years, and I am a member of the CT EMS Advisory Board.

For the past several years there has been a strong desire to eliminate the AEMT level of certification by CT's EMS leadership. However, since it is referenced in statute, it must be done by the Legislature. The decision to eliminate the AEMT certification was made over several years with a great deal of thought, input, and debate by the entire EMS community in CT. The entire EMS system was considered including costs, resources, and the future needs of healthcare.

Among the strongest proponents of AEMT elimination is the CT EMS Medical Advisory Committee. They are the Regional EMS Medical Directors from each of CT's 5 regions. The medical directors made this decision in conjunction with the state's EMS educators and EMS Coordinators, as well as the CT Department of Public Health. All of these entities together are responsible for the functioning of the CT's EMS system - which is squarely focused on delivering high quality emergency medical care to our citizens.

Additionally, elimination of the AEMT level is listed as # 7 of 17 in priority, of Commissioner Mullen's list of legislative proposals for this session. The only people that I'm aware of that support continuing this level of certification are the 700 AEMT's themselves. I can certainly understand why they would oppose this change, but that should not be a determining factor when those charged with leading CT's EMS system fail to find any benefit to patient care in the AEMT level of certification.

CT's AEMTs are all trained at the 1985 EMT-I level (EMT-I was the previous name of AEMTs.) Basically, AEMT's were trained to perform a more sophisticated assessment than an EMT and to start intravenous lines on select patients. My experience is that their focus is squarely on starting the intravenous lines. The problem with that is that starting intravenous lines does not contribute to high quality patient care. I also believe that there are issues with maintaining skill proficiency.

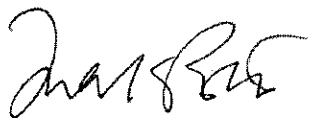
Increasing their training to the current national AEMT standard is certainly an option, but it would seem pointless since there simply is not any data that demonstrates any benefit to patients from the AEMT level of certification. Training them to the current standard would be a costly endeavor with no real benefit to patients. I also believe it would be difficult for them to maintain skill proficiency at the new AEMT level.

Approximately 6 years ago Backus Hospital instituted a moratorium on authorizing the practice of any new AEMTs. We grandfathered those that we had at the time, and currently have 3 remaining. In addition to them, there are 4 other AEMTs that are affiliated with EMS services for which we are their sponsor hospital. These services do not provide the AEMT level of care, yet we are obligated to commit time to their recertification process each time -even though they are not able to use their AEMT certification in the EMS services that they are affiliated with.

My one concern with Raised Bill 436 is the effective date of January 1, 2017. The AEMTs in CT are well aware of the decisions that have been made by CT's EMS leadership to seek elimination of this level of certification. Any phasing out over time is unnecessary, because this has been well known for over 2 years now. There is obviously no negative impact to the care that patients will receive once effective. I believe that it should be effective January 1, 2015.

It is my request that the CT Legislature codify in statute the decisions made by those responsible for the proper functioning of CT's EMS system.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred K. Potter".

Fred K. Potter, Paramedic, EMSI  
Bozrah, CT